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TREASURE STATE HEALTH

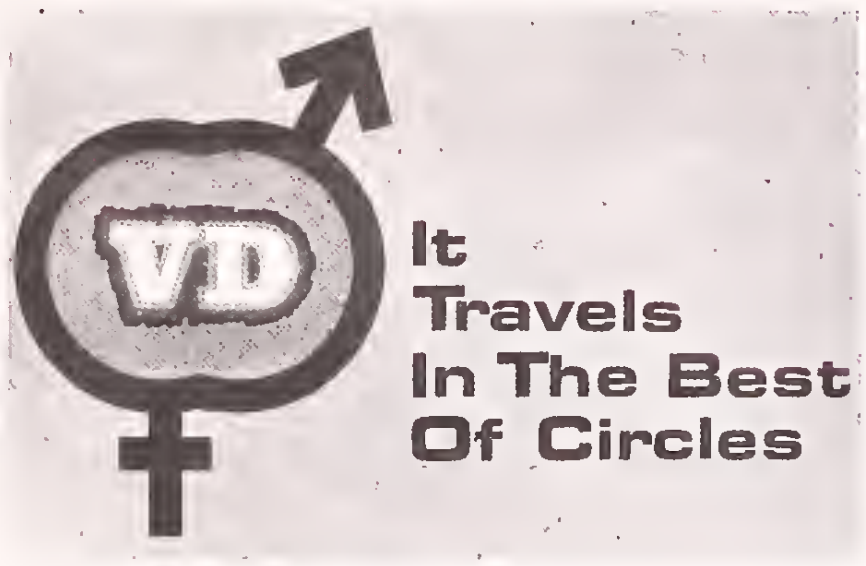
VOL. XXI, No. 7 OFFICIAL BULLETIN — State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Helena, Montana 59601 OCTOBER 1972

DIAL 1-800-332-2288

VD Hotline Underway

Montanans wanting venereal disease information can now dial a toll-free telephone number that will connect them with trained health personnel eager to provide information about general VD symptoms and treatment.

It's a "no names asked" service according to J. Anne Edwards, information specialist with the department's Preventive Health Service. The one and only purpose of the VD hotline is to curb the leading communicable disease in Montana and the nation.



To get information, a person simply calls 800-332-2288 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.—preceding the number with "1" if he's direct dialing.

This connects him with the VD hotline in Helena where trained personnel will answer any general questions about the disease and its symptoms and encourage anyone who thinks he might have VD to be examined.

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Radon Levels Being Measured To Determine Health Mine Safety

Testing is currently underway to determine what levels of radiation visitors and employes of Montana's radon health mines are being exposed to.

Regularly visiting the mines in the Boulder-Helena area along with a bumper crop of health mine enthusiasts are the chief of the department's Occupational Health Bureau, Larry Lloyd, and his assistant, Ted Hill.

No attempt is being made, Lloyd stresses, to determine if there are health benefits being derived from the mines. The mines are simply being checked to determine if either mine employes or visitors are being exposed to concentrations of radon above safe levels.

His main concern, Lloyd says, is with mine employes who breath the radon gases day in and day out. Consequently, he and Hill are measuring radiation levels in employe working areas such as mine waiting rooms and offices in addition to the levels inside the mines themselves.

Lloyd expects to have drawn some conclusions from his compiled data sometime this winter.

Until then he continues to go into the mines to service delicate measuring instruments and to run additional tests—often under the scrutiny of curious patrons who sit under heat lamps in the mine depths breathing radon gases for their various ills.

Occupational Health Bureau Chief Larry Lloyd checks a radon measuring device in the Free Enterprise Health Mine near Boulder. In the background a visitor sits under a heat lamp reading a book while he spends a 90-minute session breathing the mine's radon gases.

Social Security Increase Hurts Some

A 20 per cent increase in social security benefits which went into effect this month has hurt instead of helped some low income people around the state.

The increased benefits have raised the incomes of some people just enough to make them ineligible for welfare and has put others into a situation where they either have to pay more for food stamps or can't get them at all. Perhaps the hardest hit have been senior citizens, who lose extremely important Medicaid benefits when they are dropped from Old Age Assistance rolls.

Probably no one is more concerned about the predicament than the administrator of the State Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services' Economic Aid Division. Jack Carlson explains that he is trying to rectify the situation by adjusting state welfare guidelines just enough to keep most affected people on the rolls. But he can't raise the public assistance income guidelines enough to take care of all the low-income people affected because there wouldn't be enough money in the SRS budget to cover all the new people that would be added to the welfare rolls.

As far as the food stamp dilemma goes, Carlson stresses that there's nothing he or any other state official can do. The food stamp program is a national Department of Agriculture program. Although the state SRS Department administers the program, it has absolutely no power to adjust eligibility guidelines.

The whole eligibility problem occurred, Carlson says, because Congress was in such a hurry to pass social security increases that it didn't make provision for adjusting welfare and food stamp guidelines. Different amendments to correct the situation are being worked on, but Carlson is pessimistic that anything will be done very soon.

TREASURE STATE HEALTH

OFFICIAL BULLETIN — STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Helena, Montana 59601

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MONTANA FIRST AID

By Dr. Steven Kairys

Chief, Preventive Health Services Bureau

Syphilis

This venereal disease is transmitted only by intimate sexual contact and occurs in three stages.

—The first stage is characterized by a non-painful ulceration of the skin at the point where the bacteria enters the patient's body—most often around the genital area. This occurs 10 days to 10 weeks after contact with an infectious person, and will disappear in four to six weeks even without treatment. Sometimes the lesion may never appear even though a person has syphilis. Thus one can be infected without any early signs of infection being present.

—A secondary stage consisting of general discomfort and rash occurs sometime between a few weeks and a year from the date of the original exposure. But these symptoms may be so light as to go unnoticed and they also disappear without treatment.

—Five to 20 years later permanent damage to the heart and nervous system can be rendered by the disease in its third stage.

A simple blood test can usually determine if you have syphilis. If for any reason you suspect that you have syphilis symptoms or if you have been in contact with a person who has syphilis—see your physician. If administered early enough by a doctor, penicillin is virtually 100 per cent effective in curing the disease.

Hoping that it isn't there or that it will disappear by itself could cause you a great deal of harm in a few years.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is also transmitted only through intimate sexual contact.

In males a thick and painful white-yellow discharge from the penis occurs three to nine days after contact in 90 per cent of all cases. No discharge is apparent in the other 10 per cent although they can transmit the disease and may later develop painful joints and a general feeling of discomfort.

In females there are three stages: First, a mild inflammation of the cervix three to five days after infection which usually goes unnoticed. Second, acute abdominal pain with vaginal discharge occurs. Third, the untreated disease can develop into a chronic infection and cause sterility.

About 40 per cent of women contracting this venereal disease are never aware of any symptoms.

An examination for gonorrhea involves doing a bacterial culture from cells gathered from the genital area. Many physicians and all family planning clinics in the state are routinely culturing every female when they do a pelvic examination since so many females are unaware that they have the disease.

Treatment is usually with penicillin.

MINORS CAN BE TREATED FOR GONORRHEA AND SYPHILIS WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT IN MONTANA. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, DIAL 1-800-332-2288 TOLL FREE BETWEEN 8 A.M. AND 8 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY.

Coal-Mining Development Watched

The department is watching coal-mining development in Montana very closely with an eye toward making sure the impact on Montana's environment is minimal.

Underway is a study of the present air and water quality in Eastern Montana coal areas. Also being calculated is what would happen to the air if different grades of coal are burned in various locations under all types of weather conditions.

The department is also trying to get money for further study of present air and water conditions and to make predictions of where pollution problems could occur.

Working full-time on the Governor's Task Force on Coal and Water Development is Lynn Brant, an Air Pollution Control Specialist with the department's Air Quality Bureau.

The task force, according to Brant, is seeking to coordinate development and controls in order "to prevent and mitigate" damage done to the environment. The six-member task force will then make a report to the upcoming Legislature with recommendations for needed legislation.

Being studied by the group are dangers posed by strip mining and coal-connected industry to air and water quality, the land and Montana sociological makeup.

The task force is concerned about the large number of people who would come to Montana along with strip mining, coal-burning power generators and coal gasification plants.

—Will livable towns be developed with adequate water and sewage systems?

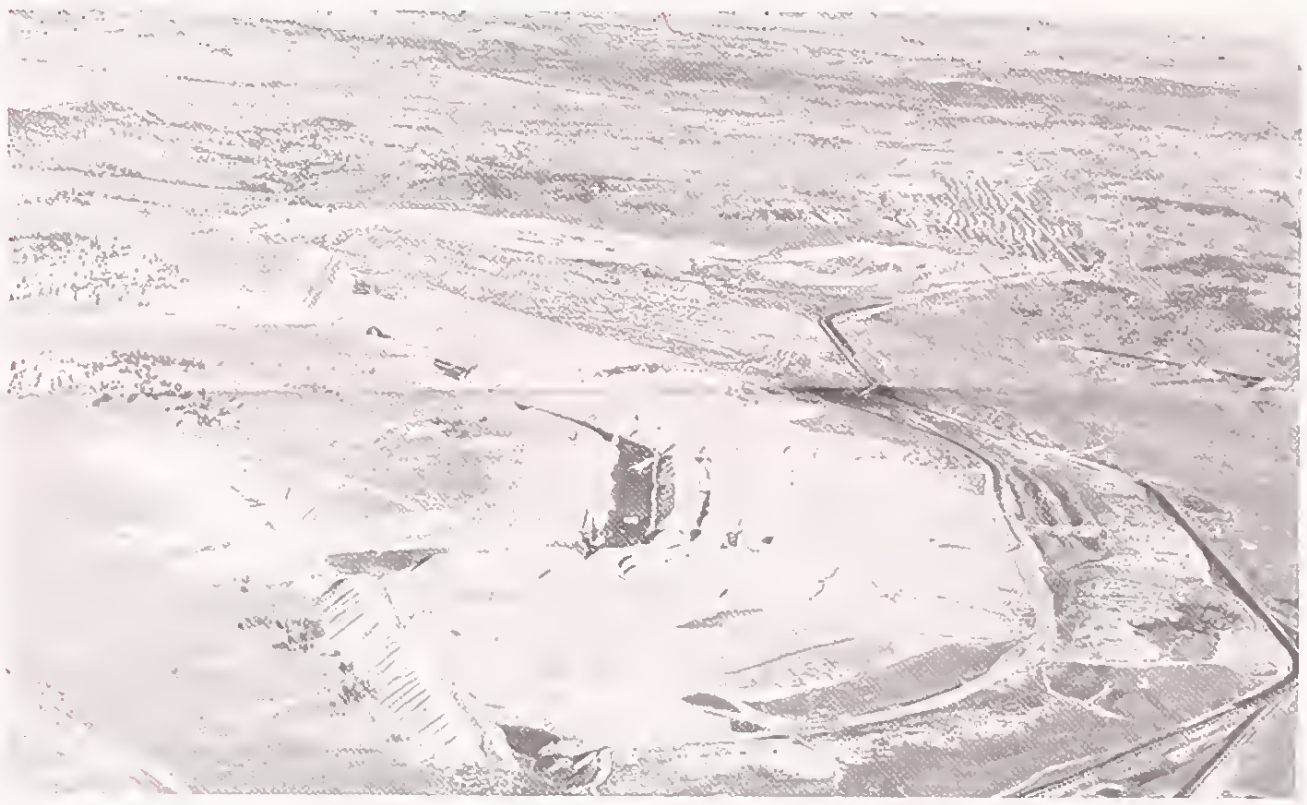
—What will happen to the state when coal mining dies out?

—What can be done about ranchers who are forced off their land by coal companies and eminent domain laws?

The federal government owns the mineral rights to 88 per cent of the land in the Birney-Decker coal area south of Forsyth in the drainages of the Little Big Horn, Powder, Tongue and Rosebud Rivers. Only seven per cent of the area's mineral rights are in private hands.

Many ranchers want to keep their land but are forced to sell to coal companies by eminent domain laws. Unless they own the mineral rights to their land, they aren't paid for anything but their topsoil. What will happen to these displaced ranchers is just one of the many questions troubling those who are concerned about the impact of coal mining on Montana.

Brant thinks the 1973 State Legislature will probably pass stronger reclamation laws and a system for taxing coal in an attempt to put strong controls over what mining outfits do to the environment and to see that Montana gets paid for its resources.



The strip mining of coal and the establishment of coal-related industry in Montana is being closely watched by many Montanans, including department employes involved in environmental quality. This Billings Gazette photo shows strip mining being done near Colstrip by Montana Power Co.'s subsidiary, Western Energy Corp.

Number of Fat Cells Key to Obesity?

Doctors are now beginning to realize why overweight babies tend to become first overweight children and then obese adults.

They have determined that the key to obesity lies in the number and fat content of the body's fat cells. Adults who were fat juveniles, they say, have three to five times as many fat cells as a person who has never been fat.

An obese adult can decrease the fat content of his fat cells, but not their total number—making it an extremely difficult task to maintain weight loss. As soon as a fat person's caloric intake exceeds energy expended, the excess is converted into fat and stored in all the extra fat cells.

"The situation is quite different when a man who has never been fat is made experimentally obese," according to Dr. Jules Hirsch of Rockefeller University.

Describing an experiment in which volunteers with no history of fatness became obese by eating more and exercising less, Hirsch says, "Those who developed sizeable increases in adipose tissue stores did so exclusively by filling cells rather than increasing the cell number."

"Weight reduction," he explains, "occurred spontaneously when overfeeding was discontinued and fat cells returned to normal size."

The way to avoid adult obesity, then, would be to prevent an inordinate number of fat cells from forming early in life. This would involve being careful not to overfeed children when fat cells are being formed. Critical periods seem to be the last three months of pregnancy, the first months of infancy and early adolescence according to Hirsch.

Hirsch explains that it used to be considered good for children to have substantial weight reserves in order to withstand certain infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, but that today there is seldom great weight losses due to childhood diseases.

"But mothers — and some physicians—haven't abandoned the concept that the fat baby is the healthy baby," according to Dr. Philip L. White, who is head of the American Medical Association's nutrition department.

White also warns against parents who require their adolescent children to clean off their plates instead of letting the children determine the portions they want.

Recyclists Believe Their Science Essential to Future

Two young men presently running a recycling center in Missoula for returnable beer bottles and aluminum cans strongly believe that recycling of all garbage is essential to future life on this planet and are looking into the possibility of setting up a full-scale recycling program in Montana.

Doug Stewart and Mark Richlen dropped out of the University of Montana Business School last fall to start what is now the largest recycling center in the state. Inspiration for the center came from a public service project conducted the summer before by the First National Bank of Missoula.

Called the "I'm Picky" campaign, the project involved weekend pickup centers for recyclable bottles and cans manned by members of Missoula service groups.

When the "I'm Picky" campaign ended, the two business students—with a First National Bank loan—established a recycling center in temporary quarters at the Missoula County Fairgrounds. Squeaking by with a few dollars profit a day in the beginning, the center was making $120 to $150 each day by the time Stewart and Richlen were forced to find a new location this summer.

Now located in an old warehouse at 725 Alder Street, the two young entrepreneurs are looking into the possibility of having a warehouse built to order so they can expand operations. Anxious to get into newspaper recycling, the two think it would be feasible right now if the center were located in a building with a floor sturdy enough to support the heavy paper baler which would have to be acquired in order to get into the paper business.

In the meantime, the center continues as a clearinghouse for beer bottles and aluminum cans. Returnable bottles are sorted, cased and prepared for pickup by empty beer trucks returning to breweries for more thirst quencher.

Aluminum cans are sacked, weighed and shipped to the Reynolds Aluminum Company.

What profits the center makes are made on the beer bottles according to Stewart, who is back in school and hopes to have his business degree by the end of fall quarter.

The center pays out 25 cents a case for the returnable beer bottles and then gets 35 to 40 cents back from the beer companies. It pays 10 cents a pound for aluminum cans (about 18 cans to a pound) and sells them to Reynolds Aluminum for 12 cents a pound. Because of shipping costs, the center ends up making only one-half cent a pound on the cans.

Full of enthusiasm and the latest recycling data, Stewart and Richlen recently opened another center in Billings and are talking about establishing still others.

Doug Stewart hands some beer bottles up to Mark Richlen at the Missoula Recycling Center which the two young men started one year ago.

The two men have contracted for various studies to determine the economic feasibility of different recycling programs in Montana. A recycling marketing study is currently being conducted under the direction of an UM Business School professor to find if it is economically possible to recycle all refuse from a city of Missoula's size.

The direction the two recyclers want to take is toward a full-scale recycling program where all of a city's garbage would be utilized. Materials such as paper, metals and glass would be sorted out. Remaining waste could be shredded and used for compost. City dwellers would be treated to the concept of selling their garbage or at least a free pick-up instead of paying to have their waste carted away to a land-fill dump.

The problem with recycling in Montana, they say, is the distance materials have to be shipped to markets. But people will be mining our dumping grounds years from now, Stewart says, if the importance of recycling is not realized and acted on soon.

WHAT'S RECYCLABLE?

Not all beer bottles are recyclable.

Those brands available in Montana in recyclable bottles are Great Falls Select, Heidelberg, Lucky Lager, Rainier and Rhinelander.

All aluminum beer cans, on the other hand, are recyclable—and, with recyclable bottles, can be returned to beer distributors in Montana communities where there are no recycling centers.

The only steel beer can that can be redeemed is sold by Lucky Lager.

If in doubt as to what's recyclable and what's not, look for a recycling explanation on a beer bottle or bottle carton before purchasing at the store.

To save time and effort in making a beer container collection, separate sacks or boxes can be set up to collect all aluminum cans and each brand of returnable bottle. This eliminates the need to make frequent trips to redemption centers.

Since the Missoula Recycling Center was started profits have jumped from a few dollars to $120-$150 a day. The Center's two operators hope to expand the center's operations before long—dealing with other types of refuse in addition to beer cans and bottles.

CITIZEN HELP WELCOMED

Citizens with complaints about food products, improper sanitation and clean air and water abuses are being encouraged to refer them to local health departments or the State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences in Helena.

According to Vern Sloulin, director of the department's Environmental Services Bureau: "We encourage and promote citizen participation."

The director of the department's Environmental Sciences Division, Ben Wake, stresses that names of those volunteering information will be kept confidential.

Wake says his division would be "very grateful if people would keep us informed" about situations where state air and water is being polluted.

Sloulin says his bureau is interested in information about any consumer products which endanger health — especially food products. Anytime a person feels he has become ill from eating a certain food, Sloulin urges him to call it to the attention of a local health officer. This would include food eaten at a restaurant.

If there is no local health office, a person can call the State Health Department at 449-2544, or write the department at the Cogswell Building, Helena, Mont. 59601.

Any food product bought at a grocery store which a consumer feels is not up to standard or not as advertised is of interest to health officers—as are unsanitary stores and restaurants.

Health officers, Sloulin says, can inspect food products—including fresh meat and produce—to determine their safety. If a product is consequently found defective, the defect can be traced to its source.

One citizen complained to the bureau about an imported French canned good. Before his bureau was finished, Sloulin says, the matter was traced back to a factory in France and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration tightened up food import regulations.

A tin of chili pepper complete with insect larvae was recently referred to the bureau by another Montanan. Again—the problem was traced back to the factory.

Sloulin says his bureau is also interested in non-food products which fall into the unsatisfactory category. Improperly labeled cleaners and hazardous toys would be two examples.

Not so long ago a breakfast cereal manufacturer quit putting little toys inside its boxes, Sloulin recalls, because of a Montana boy who accidentally ate the toy along with his cereal.

EMC Teacher Advocates Windmills

A political science teacher at Eastern Montana College has called on Gov. Forrest Anderson to encourage the building of wind mills for attaining electricity instead of strip mining Montana coal.

Associate Prof. Roger W. Snow, Jr., says coal will be needed someday "for more important purposes than conversion to heat for the purposes of generating electricity."

"Wind generators are certainly much cheaper to construct and operate than the steam-generated electric power plants that depend upon coal for operation," Snow writes.

He suggests that surplus power generated by the windmills be used to pump water from storage below hydroelectric plants to reservoirs above the stations. Then when more electricity is needed than is being produced, additional power can be generated by letting the water fall.

Snow has criticism for utility companies not developing windmills instead of coal-burning generators: "There must be a motive behind this urge for the exploitation of power.

"The lack of imagination and futuristic thinking on the part of corporations such as the Montana Power Co. are literally astounding in this age of advanced technology."

HEALTH BRIEFS

(Washington)—A St. Louis researcher has told the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs that babies may have their brains damaged when fed foods containing the flavor enhancer, monosodium glutamate.

Dr. John W. Olney of Washington University School of Medicine told the committee that his original 1969 findings showing that MSG destroys brain cells in infant laboratory animals has since been duplicated by researchers around the world. Baby food companies quit using MSG in 1969, but Olney says babies may still receive doses from adult food before they are born and from their mothers' milk.

(Salem, Ore.)—The first law in the nation prohibiting the sale of beer and carbonated soft drinks in non-returnable containers has gone into effect in Oregon. Ruled constitutional by the Oregon Circuit Court, the Bottle Deposit Law requires a five cent deposit on beer and soft drink containers.

(Philadelphia)—An aluminum beer can dropped on the forest floor this summer will probably take until the summer of 2472 to have been broken down into dust-sized bits of alumium oxide according to a Pennsylvania State University specialist in metal corrosion. Dr. Edwin Owen estimates an old-fashioned "tin" can would have returned to nature by 2072—or 400 years sooner than its aluminum counterpart.

(Princeton, N.J.)—A recent Gallup poll reports that 64 per cent of the public agree that "the decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her physician." It also said that three out of four Americans surveyed believe teenagers should have access to professional birth control advice.

(New York)—Dr. David Reuben has recommended a national VD day on which everybody from the age of puberty on up would get a dose of antibiotics plus a drug to prolong the effect. The self-styled sex expert says his idea would wipe out venereal disease in the United States.

(Washington)—The National Research Council has suggested that a 50 per cent reduction in air pollution in and around metropolitan areas could be expected to reduce lung cancer deaths by as much as 20 per cent. Data cited by a Council report indicate that exposure to air pollution early in life may have a bearing on the risk of eventually getting lung cancer.

(Mount Vernon, N.Y.)—The Consumers Union says commercial baby foods are inadequate in satisfying a baby's daily nutritional needs and probably contain harmful ingredients. In an article appearing in this month's issue of Consumer Reports, the brand rating organization says baby foods add little to the nutrition infants get from milk, cereal and vitamin-mineral supplements.

(Washington)—The Food and Drug Administration says it is going to order that pesticides and similar household poisons be sold only in childproof containers. The FDA said this is necessary to reduce the number of children injured or killed by accidentally swallowing highly toxic substances commonly found in the home such as insecticides and rat poisons.

(New York)—University of Minnesota scientists have found evidence that fluoride is an essential trace element in the diet of mice. Whether the findings in mice can be applied to man is problematical according to Dr. Wallace D. Armstrong.

(Wayne, N.J.)—New Jersey has become the first state to routinely inspect automobile exhaust systems in order to reduce carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons in the air. The 30-second test involves placing a metal probe in a car's tailpipe to obtain emission-level readings when the engine is idling.

VD Information Free for Calling

(Continued from Page 1)

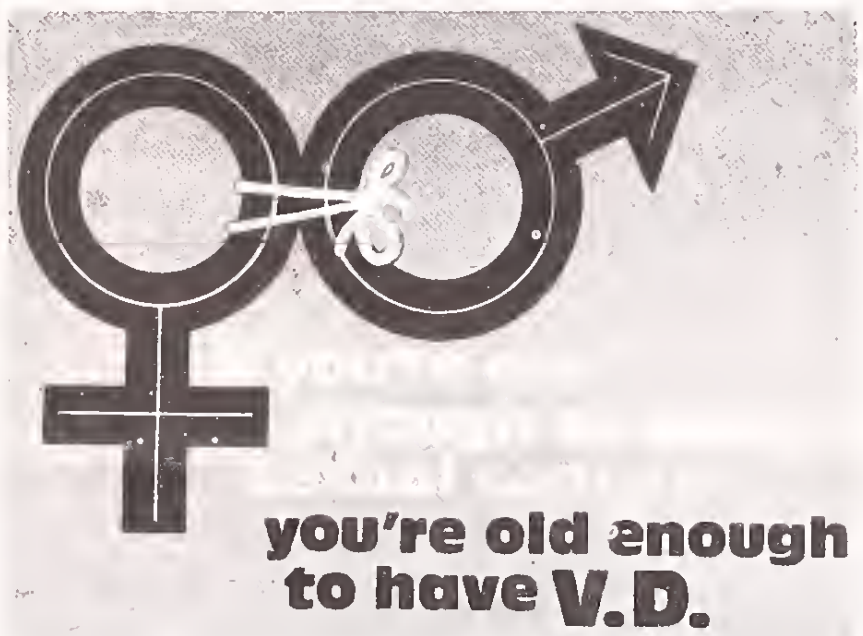
Those manning the hotline will also give information about doctors, clinics and health departments in a caller's area where he can go for an examination—and treatment if necessary.

They will definitely not try to diagnose symptoms over the phone, Miss Edwards says.

Before joining the department this spring, Miss Edwards helped design an anti-VD program in Denver while working on a masters degree in mass communications at the University of Denver. That program, which included a VD hotline, was a great success and Miss Edwards has spent the last several months setting up a similar program in Montana.

The VD hotline number is being advertised across the state with posters, pamphlets, billboards and newspaper articles. In addition, radio and television spots and interviews featuring local doctors are also being used. These are being coordinated with national spots by such celebrities as Bob Reiner, Sally Struthers, Jim Brown, and Stuart Whitman.

Minors can be legally examined and treated for VD in Montana, and Miss Edwards hopes that the young as well as not-so-young will make use of the "toll free, no names asked" link with VD information. The epidemic proportion taken on by the disease certainly indicates that accurate information is needed.



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